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When he is caged he likes to have people about him and will be quite happy for hours, whistling or singing to any one who will answer him. When he is left alone he calls out vigorously and tries hard to follow; and when allowed he follows us about the house or goes about on our shoulders. One winter he made his home in a small evergreen tree fastened in one corner of a room and was allowed to fly about at will. He would perch on our shoulders and pull at our hair, and if we objected we got a sharp tweak on the ear. Our two setters had been taught to be very careful of him, and he would alight on their backs or hop about them pecking at their feet and noses. When out in a room he is very mischievous and will pounce upon a pin-cushion full of pins and scatter them in all directions. Small articles on a shelf always attract him and he will pull and tug until they are on the edge and then lean over and watch them fall.

His voice is very harsh and discordant and his efforts to imitate the musical calls of other birds are very ludicrous. On several occasions he has escaped and as soon as he reaches a tree the wild birds collect and pursue him. I have never noticed that they fought him but he seems to fear them. After he has been out a few hours he is very happy to be back in his cage. One

morning he got out and after a long search his calls led us to some trees a distance from home. Our neighbors had found out that "Johnnie" was lost and they, especially the children, all followed us about looking for him. When we found him he answered our calls and whistled and hopped down to the lower branches, but could not be induced to come to us. After waiting an hour or two, our friends' patience gave out and they went away one by one. When we were alone my sister sat down and poured some seed into her lap. At once he flew down and began to eat eagerly, chattering noisily the while. Then he allowed himself to be put into the cage.

Our bird does not seem to be at all affected by the severity of the mountain winters, although the wild grosbeaks always migrate. They remain in the mountains only during the summer, while they rear their young. Their nests are built very high and are hard to find, for when the old birds leave the ground they rise straight into the air to a great height before turning to their nest. Our bird's brilliant plumage makes him a coveted pet in this latitude, and his unusual bird-intelligence has won him a high place in our household.

MISS ESTELLE C. BURTON.

Truckee, Cal.



Notes on Some Birds of Cape Nome, Alaska

BY JOSEPH GRINNELL

THE ten weeks from July 20 until October 2, 1899, I spent in the vicinity of Cape Nome, Alaska, now notorious as the latest mecca of the gold-hunter. The previous year I had passed further north, in the Kotzebue sound region, during which time I could collect and study birds at pleasure. But when we reached Nome all our attention was centered on mining and prospecting. I therefore had no time for outside matters and not a single skin was

saved, though I couldn't help seeing what birds happened within eye shot range. But, as all the species here recorded had been familiar to me during the previous year, I am confident of their proper identity. Birds in general were far less numerous than on Kotzebue Sound, the sea coast in the vicinity of Cape Nome being much more barren of vegetation.

Our first base of operations was on some beach claims about seven miles

west of Nome City. Here we were at work from July 20 until August 25. And here I made the following bird-notes, most of which are contained in letters written at the time to Mr. F. S. Daggett of Pasadena.

The beach at this point is about fifty yards wide and bordered by a low bank or bluff, from the top of which extends the level or slightly rolling tundra back to the hills some five miles inland. This tundra is barren of any vegetation except the spongy carpet of sodden moss, with here and there in low places patches of grass, margining lakes or swales. On the sides of the short ravines, which cut through the bluff at intervals, are occasional patches of dwarf willows a foot or less in height. August 6—Have seen several small companies of Emperor Geese (*Phalacrocorax canagica*) flying along just outside the surf, always late in the evening. Bands of Pacific Kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla pollicaris*) often pass up or down the beach on the lookout for tom-cod; and an occasional Point Barrow Gull (*Larus barrovianus*) comes sailing along, but none of the gulls loiter along here anywhere. A pair of Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisæa*) feeding their full-grown young, afford almost the only bird notes I have heard for days. The young have a pleading yet harshly strung succession of calls, and hover along the beach, keeping in close company with their parents, ever ready for the fish caught in the surf by the latter. The precision with which a tern can drop onto a tiny fish, or crustacean, in the boiling surf is remarkable. And yet they seem so light on the wing, and rise from the water with so little apparent exertion. Long-tailed Jaegers (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) are common cursing back and forth over the tundra, or poisoning against the wind, sparrow-hawk fashion. Their long, pointed, streamer-like central tail-feathers distinguish them at a glance from the other two species, neither of which, however, have I seen here.

They feed on meadow-mice, and cater-

pillars mostly, but their piratical habit of forcing gulls to disgorge is of frequent notice. As there are no mud-flats or lagoons here, waders are very scarce. I saw a Pacific Godwit (*Limosa lapponica baueri*) flying overhead back toward the tundra. Also scattering companies of curlew (probably *Numenius borealis*) have appeared several times flying along the bluff. Several Golden Plover (*Charadrius dominicus*), which I have no doubt are rearing young, are to be found at any time on the back part of the claims. Their melodious, warbling call reminds me of a robin's song. These plovers show decided preference, where ever I have found them, for the driest upland tundras. One day last week I was at work on a prospect hole back of the bluff, when three Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*) alighted among the mossy hummocks within a few yards of me. They were very tame, and remained in the vicinity for an hour or more, feeding on insects and their larvæ.

Black-throated Loons (*Gavia arctica*) are numerous, and are constantly to be seen and heard overhead as they fly back and forth from the lakes on the tundra to their feeding-grounds out to sea. I have found quite a number of dead Crested Auklets (*Simorhynchus cristatellus*) washed up on the beach lately. Large numbers of the birds were seen out in Bering Sea, south of Bering Straits, when we were sailing down from Kotzebue Sound. Land birds here are very few. I flushed one Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*) back of the bluff the other day; and the boys say they saw a hawk of some kind—judging from their description a gyrfalcon. I saw two juvenile Alaskan Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus alasensis*) yesterday, feeding about a ravine in the bluff, and also one Siberian Yellow Wagtail (*Budytes flavus leucostriatus*). A pair of immature Redpolls (*Acanthis linaria*) have been noted several times along the bluff near camp. One rather unexpected bird was seen, a White-winged Crossbill (*Loxia leucoptera*) on July 26, flying east

along the bluff close past me. Its note and bearing, so familiar after my experience with the species last spring, were unmistakable. The nearest timber must be 75 miles in the interior; but I have noted, in the case of several interior species, a straggling from the timbered regions in late summer toward the more barren coast region.

These were all the species of birds observed during more than a month at this point. On August 26th we broke camp here and proceeded to the mouth of Nome River, which flows into Bering Sea three miles east of Nome City. There we loaded skiffs with provisions, and for the next two days towed and dragged them up the swift shallow stream some twelve miles to the mouth of Buster Creek. Toward the upper part of the river's course, the willows and alders become larger, until there are tracts of them bordering the stream as much as ten feet in height. Here, on August 27, I noted the following species: Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*), Black-poll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*), Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*), Western Tree Sparrow (*Spizella monticola ochracea*), Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*), Golden crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia coronata*), Gambel's Sparrow [*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*] Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Hylocichla aliciae*), Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemannii exilis*), and Snowy Owl.

Small land-birds were most numerous noted on the 27th and 28th of August. The fall migrations were then evidently in progress. The willow thickets were green and inviting, and the weather was as yet moderate. Most of the birds were heard singing, especially the warblers, just as in spring. Water-birds were also seen along the river, though in small numbers. A young Sabine's Gull (*Xema sabinii*) was met with on a sand-bar, and as we slowly towed our boats along, it kept flying from bar to bar ahead of us until we reached Buster Creek. A few

large gulls were feeding on dead salmon along the river. The Red-throated Loon (*Gavia lumme*), as well as the Black-throated, was quite common, seen mostly flying overhead along the valley. There were also a few Pintails (*Dafila acuta*) and cranes.

The month of September we spent in working placer claims on Buster Creek. This is a small stream flowing from a canon about three miles back among the hills. It is lined with willow thickets, and the hillsides are clothed to some extent with the same vegetation. On September 3 there was a heavy frost and some ice. Small birds were soon scarce. Siberian Yellow Wagtails were seen on September 8; the last Golden-crowned and Western Tree Sparrows, and Alaskan Longspurs on the 10th; the last Gray-cheeked Thrushes on the 8th.

Willow Ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*) were very numerous, and I secured many a potpie-full in an hour's hunt after supper. Ptarmigan were at first quite tame, and a flock could be followed around the hillsides until several were shot. They finally got the habit of scattering in all directions as soon as flushed, and then only one or two could be located and followed up. They were beautiful birds at this season in their parti-colored plumage of chestnut-brown and white.

A Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus gyrfalco*) and a Snowy Owl were seen on the 17th of September. Also on this date and for the succeeding week immense flocks of Little Brown Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) were passing southward high overhead. I am pretty sure this is the species we see and hear so much of in migration in California, and not so often the Sandhill Crane. Pectoral Sandpipers (*Tringa maculata*) were noted in flocks on the tundras quite often in the early part of September, but had disappeared by this date. Golden Plover became very numerous toward the last of September, on the hillsides, feeding on blueberries. Several were shot close around the

tents, and even after the snowfall of the 18th, which completely whitened the ground for several days, I could hear their clear, musical notes every few minutes as they flew past along the creek or up on the hills. Several were even seen on October 1 among the houses in Nome City, where they were being shot at whenever they alighted. The last two weeks of September became steadily colder and we were finally unable to carry on sluicing. So we returned to Nome City, and set sail on our schooner "Penelope," for California, on the 2d of October.

Thus, but 32 species were observed in the vicinity of Cape Nome during more than two months time. But of course this list would be largely increased if one should collect systematically, especially in the earlier part of the season.



The Nesting of Clarke's Nutcracker

[Read before Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club Sept. 15, 1900.]

IN giving an account of the recent addition to the collection of Miss Jean Bell of the nest, eggs and parent of the commonly styled Clarke's Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*), I record an experience of difficulty and privation endured under the stimulus of eager desire and well-founded hope. I followed the assertion of a logger that he had seen several pairs of the omnivorous nutcrackers at a certain point in Salt Lake county. The place indicated was between Big Cottonwood and Neff's canons at an altitude of about 3,000 feet above Salt Lake City, and it was on the 25th day of April that I turned search into discovery and captured the female bird sitting on her nest and three eggs.

That the breeding was a second one was clear from the loss of feathers on the bird's breast. The eggs all perfectly fresh, the late date and the early season indicate this instance of nesting as particularly late for this bird. As to

characteristic features, the eggs were 1.20x.92, 1.22x.92 and 1.22x.93, pale grayish-green, spotted chiefly on their larger ends, of properly ovate form, the markings being of different shades of brown, gray and lavender.

My pilot to my covey was the male bird, whom I saw making a bee-line rapidly to a point which I suspected to be a nest. I listened eagerly and heard a chirp, then the male bird flew away. I quietly climbed the tree and at a height of 40 feet and on a branch at a point eight feet from the trunk my prize was visible. Slowly crawling to it, I succeeded in capturing the female, then the eggs and lastly the nest. This nest was constructed between growing shoots and accommodated its irregular shape to them. It is, in outside diameter, 12x14 inches, with a depth of 4½ inches. The inside cavity has a diameter of 4½ inches and a depth of 3 inches, and the nest is composed of coarse dead twigs of pine and heavily lined with fiber from pine bark.

The pine in which the nest was built was near the summit of the mountain and on its south slope near the outer edge of the forest. On April 26 I made another trip to the locality, reaching the summit shortly after daylight. I stationed myself on a high point and watched the movements of the nutcrackers through my field glass, and after making several false points which caused considerable rough climbing, I finally located a nest containing four young birds which would have left the nest in two or three days. The nest was on a horizontal branch about fifty feet up and five feet from the trunk, saddled on a four-inch limb, surrounded by a heavy growth of small twigs. In both cases the nest could not be seen from the ground. The tree in which this nest was situated was on the same mountain side, and about 200 yards farther down on the south side of the timber.

W. H. PARKER.

Salt Lake City, Aug. 29, 1900.